

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAM #1557/01 0641315
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 051315Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8597
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0285
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 1170
RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUMICEA/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS AMMAN 001557

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR,
I/GNEA, B/BXN, B/BRN, NEA/PPD, NEA/IPA FOR ALTERMAN
USAID/ANE/MEA
LONDON FOR TSOU
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON HAMAS IN MOSCOW

Summary

-- Lead stories in all papers published today, March 5, highlight the Arab Foreign Ministers' decision at the Arab foreign ministers summit meeting in Khartoum "supporting Hamas movement in the face of the 'unjust conditions' being imposed on it and calling for adopting the Arab peace initiative as a basis for a just settlement of the Arab Israeli conflict". Other lead stories highlight developments in Nazareth following the attack against the Church of the Annunciation. More stories continue to highlight the violence in Iraq.

Editorial Commentary

-- "Hamas in Moscow"

Daily columnist Nahed Hattar writes on the back page of the independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (03/05): "The Russians do not play games and their invitation to Hamas for negotiations in Moscow is not a side tactic, but a penetration of the heart of strategic developments in the Middle East. The Hamas movement's victory in the Palestinian elections is not just a regular victory in a founded democracy, but a complete political coup that ousted the 40-year Fatah movement control over the Palestinian policy.. Fatah's defeat is comprehensive and final, and the fact that Fatah retains the presidency means nothing, because the Palestinian leadership has moved to Hamas, which is backed by the Palestinian people inside and outside the territories and by Syria and Iran and their allies, and which is capable, in turn, to control the Palestinian armament and the decision-making process. At the end of the day, Hamas has become a Palestinian reality, and sooner or later, all parties will come to cope with this fact and adapt, even it has to do with context of the settlement, a context that will itself undergo changes and renovation to accommodate the new Palestinian givens. Here comes Russia's role, being the only international party capable of breaking Israel's ban on Hamas and of qualifying Hamas to deal with international realities.. Russia's qualification however does not mean that Hamas is made to succumb to American demands. Neither Moscow has an interest in that nor

Hamas is willing to abandon its victory and its chances. Qualification simply means breaking the rough edges and reaching basic understandings on the context with room for maneuvering."

-- "Hamas and Moscow and the conflict's vocabulary"

Columnist Mazen Hammad writes on the op-ed page of the center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (03/05): "The problem is not in Hamas' political program, because it has been known and declared for a very long time. The problem, at least as far as Israel and the United States are concerned, lies in the vocabulary that Hamas seems to have reintroduced. Who would have imagined that after Oslo, the roadmap and the unilateral Israeli withdrawals one would say: there is no peace until Israel's withdrawal to the 1967 borders? Such a conditional statement that is being reiterated by Hamas since its victory in the elections and that was said by Khaled Mash'al in Moscow has been absent.. Four thousand reporters who attended Mash'al's press conference did not feel that there was any change in Hamas' program. The conference, however, was an important occasion to revitalize core questions that Israel had sought to eliminate from the conscience and to bury in history books. Some of these questions include: where are Israel's borders that you demand we acknowledge? Who should acknowledge the other, the victim or the victimizer? Is the problem with Hamas or with the occupation? Washington, on its part, swallowed Moscow's stab in the back and tried to portray the situation as if Russia was delivering the message from the quartet.. Yet, Washington's choice to focus on this little part of the situation does not nullify the fact that Moscow is rebelling against the quartet and the United States and is deciding to look for its independence. If the message has reached Hamas, as the U.S. Secretary of State said when she commented about the 'positive' meetings between the Russians and Mash'al, then a different and more effective message has reached the world . namely that Israel did not respect the concessions of the Palestinian people."

HALE